



## Indiana State Department of Health

### Sweat Testing

Your baby's newborn screen showed that your baby might have a condition called cystic fibrosis (also called CF). Your baby needs to have a second test, called a sweat test, to find out if he/she has CF. The sweat test should be done at a Cystic Fibrosis Foundation-accredited laboratory to make sure that the test results are accurate. There are four accredited laboratories in Indiana. You should plan to be at the clinic for about 2 hours. Parents will be with their baby the entire time the test is being done.

#### What happens during a sweat test?

The sweat test measures the amount of salt in the sweat. No needles are used, and the test will not hurt your baby. In the first part of the test, a special chemical will be put on a small area of your baby's arms. This chemical makes your baby sweat. Next, an armband with small electrodes will be placed over this area. A weak electrical current will be passed through the skin. This causes a tingling feeling much like when your arm is "asleep". This part of the test takes 5 minutes. Finally, gauze pads are used to collect your baby's sweat. The sweat will then be taken to the laboratory, where the amount of salt will be measured.

#### What will the sweat test tell me about my baby?

Children and adults with CF have a higher amount of sodium and chloride (salt) in their sweat. If the sweat test is normal, your baby most likely does not have CF. Most people who have CF will have high levels of salt and positive sweat tests, even when they are babies. Once a test result is positive, it is always positive. Sweat test results do not change when a baby has a cold or other illness.

#### How should I prepare my baby for the sweat test?

Parents should not apply creams or lotions to the baby's skin 24 hours before the sweat test. There are no other special preparations before the test. There is no need to change your baby's diet or other activity. All regular medications may be used and will have not change the sweat test results. Feeding your baby just before or during the test may help your baby to sweat. It also helps to have warm clothes or blankets to wrap your baby in during the test.

#### When will I know the results of the sweat test?

The lab will usually have the sweat test results ready for your doctor within 24 hours after performing the sweat test. The sweat test laboratory will call your baby's doctor as soon as the sweat test results are ready. Your baby's doctor will then call you to discuss the results of the sweat test and talk about what your family should do next.

#### Can the test results be uncertain?

The sweat test can be done at any age. However, some babies may not make enough sweat to complete the test. If your baby does not produce enough sweat during the test, the test should be repeated once the baby is bigger.

In a small number of cases, sweat test results are "borderline." This means that the level of salt in your baby's sweat was slightly higher than normal, but not high enough to diagnose CF. If your baby has a borderline sweat test, your baby's doctor will talk about what your family should do next.

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For more information, please contact the CF Coordinator at ISDH by calling (888) 815-0006.